

REMARKS

In the Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 21-26, 43, and 45 and objected to claims 5, 6, 15, 27, 28, and 37. The Examiner also indicated claims 5, 6, 15, 27, 28, and 37 as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 7-14, 16-20, 29-36, 38-42, and 44 are currently withdrawn from consideration. In this Amendment and Response, the Applicants amended claims 1, 5, 15, 23, 27, and 37 (including withdrawn claims 16-20 and 38-42) to expedite allowance of the present application in view of this allowable subject matter. Applicants note that independent claim 1 was incorporated into allowable dependent claim 5, allowable dependent claim 15 was incorporated into independent claim 1, independent claim 23 was incorporated into allowable dependent claim 27, and allowable dependent claim 37 was incorporated into independent claim 23. In view of the allowable claims 5, 15, 27, and 37, Applicants believe all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Moreover, Applicants believe the withdrawn species claims 7-14, 16-20, 29-36, 38-42, and 44 are allowable in view of the allowable base claims 1, 5, 23, and 27. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the previously withdrawn claims 7-14, 16-20, 29-36, 38-42, and 44 along with claims 1-6, 15, 21-28, 37, 44, and 45.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 21-24, 26, 27, 28, 43, and 45 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Pruchniak (U.S. Patent No. 6,075,518). As noted above, the Applicants amended claims 1, 5, 15, 23, 27, and 37 (including withdrawn claims 16-20 and 38-42) in view of the allowable subject matter. Given that all independent claims 1, 5, 23, and 27 now recite features of the allowable claims, the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is believed to be moot. For this reason, the Applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 3 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Pruchniak in view of Browers et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,392,634). As noted above, the Applicants amended independent claims 1 and 23 to incorporate the features recited in

dependent claims 15 and 37, which the Examiner previously indicated as allowable. Accordingly, the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is believed to be moot. For this reason, the Applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Allowable Subject Matter

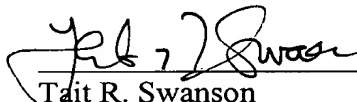
As noted above, the Examiner indicated claims 5, 6, 15, 27, 28, and 37 as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants amended claims 1, 5, 15, 23, 27, and 37 (including withdrawn claims 16-20 and 38-42) to expedite allowance of the pending claims 1-45.

Conclusion

The Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims should be in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner believes certain amendments are necessary to clarify the present claims or if the Examiner wishes to resolve any other issues by way of a telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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